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- ART. XI.—1. *A Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles.* By HORATIO B. HACKETT, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in Newton Theological Institution. A New Edition, revised and greatly enlarged. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. 1858. 8vo. pp. 480.
2. *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament.* By DR. HERMANN OLSHAUSEN, Professor of Theology in the University of Erlangen. Translated from the German for Clark's Foreign and Theological Library. First American Edition, revised after the Fourth German Edition, by A. C. KENDRICK, D. D., Professor of Greek in the University of Rochester. To which is prefixed OLSHAUSEN'S *Proof of the Genuineness of the Writings of the New Testament*, translated by DAVID FOSDICK, JR. In 6 vols. 8vo. New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, & Co. 1856–1858.
3. *Kritisch Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament.* VON DR. HEINR. AUG. WILH. MEYER. Abtheilung I.—XV. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht. 1855.

IN the numerous Latin works of the modern German theologians, we are often amused by the festive aspect of the words and phrases which they apply to the most abstruse and knotty questions and discussions, evincing a joyousness of spirit in the unearthing of Hebrew roots and the collation of Syriac synonymes, which we can only admire without hoping to emulate. Thus a commentator will quote a sentence from Gesenius in which an Arabic, a Coptic, and a Chaldee word are married to the Greek or Hebrew word under discussion by Latin copulas, and will pleasantly say of it, *arridet mihi*, “it smiles upon me,” while beyond the precincts of a German university it wears an inexorable frown. A dissertation, which taxes and transcends the critical acumen of the ripest American scholar, bears the tripping title of an *excursus*,—a name which we might give to a school-boy's run at recess. But even this is too grave a designation for frequent use. The more modest writer, who flourishes his virgin blade in defence of some theory too recondite, one would think, ever to be adopted or refuted, christens his trea-

tise a *prolusio*,—a “forth-playing,” a game, a piece of fun. There is one title that often meets our eye,—we never saw the book,—which looks absolutely wicked. It is Fischer’s *Prolusiones de Vitiis Lexicorum*,—“Sports at the Faults of Lexicons.” That the lexicons have numerous faults and untrustworthinesses, has been to us a long-experienced fact too serious for laughter.

But if the witty German made fun of lexicons, what rare sport might not Biblical commentaries have afforded him! We could copy a long list of inconceivable *sottises* committed by critics, whose works no student of the Scriptures can afford to dispense with. Adam Clarke, always profound, and opening a magazine of learning on almost every mooted point, abounds in the grossest solecisms of interpretation. Thus, by a process of reasoning which not one theologian in a hundred has learning enough to verify or to gainsay, he proves the serpent that tempted Eve to have been a monkey. Still more atrocious, not indeed for its erudite absurdity, but for its utter non-appreciation and inconceivable bathos, is his annotation on the impressive words of our Saviour,—“Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” On this verse Clarke sagely remarks: “A legion at different times contained different numbers; 4,200, 5,000, and frequently 6,000 men; and from this saying, taking the latter number, which is the common rate, may we not safely believe that the angels of God amount to more than 72,000?”

We were startled the other day on being asked by a friend, equally intelligent and devout, whether the cock that alarmed Peter was a Levite on duty at the temple, or a Roman sentinel; and were surprised to learn that this alternative, which we supposed had not found its way into sober English, had been named as indicating the only tenable theories, in one of the most deservedly popular of recent American commentaries. In point of fact, it has been gravely maintained by more than one Continental critic, that the only crowing which Peter heard was the knocking on the gate of the temple, by which the Levitical watch called the priests to their morning

duty. The ground of this strange perversion of the only possible sense of the narrative is a passage in an obscure Rabbinical writing, in which it is said, "They do not keep cocks at Jerusalem, upon account of the holy things; nor do the priests keep them throughout the land of Israel." But Lightfoot, who quotes this passage, tells us that there is abundant evidence that this useful fowl was kept at Jerusalem, as well as in other places, and cites the story of a cock which was arraigned before the Sanhedrim for the murder of a child, tried, convicted, sentenced, and stoned to death.

In our list of lapses of common sense which almost exceed belief, we ought not to omit the theory of "the temptation" advocated by the generally rational and judicious Kuinoel and Rosenmüller, and by some half-dozen other critics whose names are less familiar to us; namely, that the devil who tempted Christ was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, chosen and deputed for that purpose.

Where commentators have not outraged probability and the laws of language, they have not infrequently ignored patent or easily ascertainable facts in geography, history, and archæology, and substituted for them their own ideas of what ought to be. Thus, because in Deuteronomy certain blessings are appointed to be uttered on Mount Gerizim, and corresponding curses on Mount Ebal, it has been common to represent the former as surpassingly verdant and beautiful, the latter as frightfully sterile and dreary. But Robinson says: "The sides of both these mountains were to our eyes equally naked and sterile. The only exception in favor of Gerizim, so far as we could perceive, is a small ravine coming down opposite the west end of the town, [Nâbulus, the ancient Sychar,] which indeed is full of fountains and trees; in other respects both mountains, as here seen, are desolate, except that a few olive-trees are scattered upon them."

Of all follies perpetrated by Biblical interpreters, the palm, as we think, must be given to the expositions of the miraculous narratives of the Gospels by Paulus, who professes to receive the record in the sense in which the Evangelists wrote it, and takes upon himself the arduous task of so interpreting their language as to make it imply nothing supernatural,—

an enterprise hardly less daring than it would be to demonstrate that two and two are five.

Such specifications as we have now adduced might go very far towards justifying Douglas Jerrold's definition of *commentators*,—"worthy folks who write on books as men with diamonds write on glass, obscuring light with scratches." Yet of these very critics who at times provoke our mirthfulness, there is hardly one whose annotations are not in the majority of instances grave and valuable. And even where we cannot assent to their conclusions, we are often essentially aided in reaching and verifying our own, by having a variety of possible and probable interpretations suggested to us. Between the different significations assigned to a passage, the reader must generally appeal to his own common sense for the ultimate decision; and he who makes this his last resort need not be misguided or bewildered by the sophistry of a mere word-manipulator. At the same time, with the undeniable obscurity that rests on single words and phrases in the Scriptures, we have abundant reason for gratitude that the great truths appertaining to the spiritual world and the fundamental laws of duty are so plainly written that "he may run that readeth," and "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Second to no qualification for a commentator on the Scriptures is acquaintance with the natural laws of composition, and the natural history of books. First-hand works and compilations, original writings and versions, designed history and intended allegory, the reports of eye or ear witnesses and the semi-myths of time-swollen tradition, have respectively their unmistakable literary characteristics; yet what prides itself on being the "higher criticism" of the sacred writings, ignores or confounds these marks of discrimination, and seems to substitute for them the more simple law of casting doubts on the authenticity of each book in proportion to its spiritual and religious worth if true. We make this stricture in sad earnestness; for there are critics, with whom the very grounds which render a document inestimably precious to the Christian believer furnish sufficient internal evidence to counterbalance the strongest array of testimony in its favor.

"I 'spect I grow'd; don't think nobody never made me," — was Topsy's enlightened theory as to her own origin. Neological criticism passes a similar judgment upon most of the books of the sacred canon. Other books had authors, and were "made" at definite periods of time. The Pentateuch, the prophetic writings, the Gospels, "grow'd," yet not, like Topsy or any other living thing, by assimilation, but by accretion, like a snowball, which, originally no bigger than a walnut, may by dint of rolling become large enough to demand a regiment of boys to move it. These books respectively sprang each from a diminutive nucleus, which gained volume in its passage down successive generations, every transcriber modifying and adding at pleasure, yet, strange to say, making in each instance a composition which, to us unlearned readers, bears a perfectly homogeneous aspect, so that, with no man to guide us, we could never tell which was the original document, and what portions are to be regarded as the deposits of later ages. One great defect of the theory is, that it does not explain how the books stopped growing, or why they have not received the *detritus* of these latter centuries.

Most persons who are interested in the critical questions appertaining to the Bible, believe in the possibility, and rejoice to own the historical fact, of prophecy, miracle, and revelation. If we are prepared on philosophical grounds to occupy this position, then the only questions relate to the internal self-coherency of each individual book, and the amount of external evidence in behalf of its genuineness as the work of its reputed author or age. Its supernatural contents in no wise vitiate or impair this evidence, nor do they require for it proof differing in nature or in degree from that on which we admit the genuineness of other ancient writings. Now a large part of the reasoning of critics of the naturalist school has for its major premise the proposition, "A miracle is incapable of proof." Commentators of this class, then, are of no worth to the Christian student, except as they may occasionally elucidate the meaning of a single word or phrase. Their laws of interpretation preclude their trustworthiness as to the continuous exegesis of writings which are to them mythical or fabulous, while to the religious world they are the reputed record of truth and fact.

Another essential requisite in a commentator is an imagination sufficiently vivid and active to reproduce the circumstances of an unfamiliar age and region. In this, the German critics are, of all schools, the most palpably deficient. They antedate modern philosophies. They suppose the existence in Palestine, in the first century, of precisely the mental conditions which are rife in Germany at the present day. They ascribe to Paul, and James, and Peter, their own "stand-point," and draw from them oracles as to metaphysical and dogmatic subtleties, which could never have found lodgement in an Oriental brain. They presuppose in the sacred writers the dialectic culture and the logical precision which were equally beyond their possible attainment and worthless for the purposes of their sacred mission. At the same time, no critics handle archæology so awkwardly as the Germans in general. They have all the requisite knowledge, and pour it out in the most ample affluence; but they cannot combine and vivify its details, so as to represent the features and spirit of the primitive Eastern life, which glows on every page of the record.

It might seem superfluous to say, had not the need been so often illustrated by the lack, that a commentator needs to appreciate with clear understanding and full sympathy the position and aim of his author. In this regard, English commentators, and especially the most devout among them, have been the most faulty. Some very popular and edifying expositors of the Bible write as if their object was, not to determine in what sense the author, being the man he was and having a specific purpose in view, must have used such and such words, but to press out of them the utmost possible fulness and variety of religious meaning. The "double sense" of prophecy, which involves no intrinsic improbability, is a very slight matter as compared with the dozen or score of equally authentic meanings which Matthew Henry can deduce from a passage, whose literal signification he perhaps wholly overlooks. Then, too, this entire class of interpreters utterly disregard the laws of continuous discourse. Every sentence is an aphorism, a universal proposition, unlimited by what precedes or follows. Nor does it matter whether, in the connec-

tion in which it stands, the sentence is an affirmation, or whether it is a concession for the sake of argument, an hypothesis, an objection cited to be refuted, or a merely rhetorical reference to some opinion or event of the times, the same canon of literal interpretation is applied to it. Thus, to take a strong instance, the book of Ecclesiastes — if not written by Solomon, at least written in his name — derives its entire worth from its autobiographical character, from its being a record of the successive life-experiments which the king of Israel made and repented of, before he reached the “conclusion of the whole matter,” so impressively set forth; yet we are acquainted with commentaries in which the repudiated opinions of the jaded sensualist, cited for no other purpose than to be held up for pious scorn, are treated as grave announcements of fundamental religious dogmas under the broad seal of inspiration. In like manner, the technical subtleties which St. Paul adduces only that he may show them in contrast with the beautiful simplicity of Christian truth, have been assumed as the divinely given moulds for Christian thought; and systems of belief, which the Apostle defined only that he might make his rejection of them more explicit and absolute, have furnished the terminology for permanent doctrines of the Church.

Strange to say, when John Locke announced that St. Paul's Epistles ought to be interpreted as actual letters, continuous, coherent, each addressed to a certain person or community, and with a definite end in view, he created a new era in Biblical exegesis. The Scriptures had previously been treated rather as homogeneous materials impressed with certain characteristics of sanctity, than as separate writings, each by its aim and its contents suggesting principles essential to its own interpretation. Locke pointed the way more successfully than he pursued it. He understood very imperfectly the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament, and at the same time he lacked the sprightliness and vividness of conception and fancy which alone could have enabled him to follow St. Paul in his rapid transitions, his glowing rhetoric, and his arguments, rigidly logical, yet not strung upon one another, but fused as into chain-lightning, and flashing intuitive conviction. The great metaphysician's postulates in criticism have



now become axioms with the higher order of interpreters, and by the use of his method, the "things hard to be understood" in the Pauline Epistles have been reduced in number and in magnitude, until now no ancient writings lie more entirely within the comprehension of the patient and discriminating scholar.

*Proof-texts*, so called, — the bane of theology, — are the stumbling-block of mediocre critics. It is but seldom that they have the courage (even if they have the requisite discernment) to consider a text of this class in its actual significance, as determined by its position and by analogous statements in the same writing. A proof-text is a verse, or a fragment of a verse, torn by main force from its environments of circumstance, occasion, and context, — from whatever might limit and define it, — and employed as a divinely given aphorism, embodying a logical statement of some essential truth. Such a method of argument as is furnished by these texts is unworthy of being employed, unless one is constrained to measure strength with an antagonist whose limited intelligence makes him mail-proof against the weapons of a more manly warfare. Common sense would not suffer men to treat in this way any book but the Bible; nor would the Bible have ever been thus dealt with, had not the press first mangled it by the arbitrary division into versicles, each versicle a separate paragraph. None can say how many strange heresies would have remained unborn, how many sects would never have seen the light, what rivers of polemic ink might have been spared, had the Bible been printed as other books are, with such divisions only as the sense demands. In point of fact, of two opposite dogmas, that which has the least of Scriptural testimony in its favor is, with many minds, the most likely to find credence. One doctrine may pervade the whole sacred record, may give the undertone to prophecy, precept, and parable, may be expressed or implied in forms too numerous for specification; and in that case it will seem to have no *proof-texts*, because there are none which its advocates could single out as declarative of it, without admitting that it had a less substantial basis than the general voice of Scripture. The opposing dogma may seem to be taught in two, three, or half-a-dozen

texts; and because they stand out in such apparent contrast with the whole face of the record, they are conspicuous, remarkable, emphatic, — they constrain the awe-stricken belief of the superficial or timid inquirer, and blind him to a hundred-fold the amount of conflicting evidence. It is the merit of the truly enlightened and erudite commentator, that he seeks to disenchant his readers of the mere charlatanry of piecemeal criticism, and to present the breadths of meaning that lie in continuous discourses, connected trains of thought, and entire discussions.

From these general, perhaps desultory strictures on the office and province of commentators, we pass to the special consideration of the works named at the head of this article.

Professor Hackett's Commentary is a thoroughly revised and much enlarged edition of a work originally published in 1852. It might, at first thought, have seemed that the Acts of the Apostles less needed the labors of so justly eminent a critic, than any other book of the sacred canon. Certainly the reader of our common English version, to whom many Pauline passages are veiled in impenetrable obscurity, finds in this plain narrative hardly a sentence which does not seem directly and perfectly intelligible. But this book, if it needs less explanation, needs more illustration than any other part of the New Testament. Its story has for its varied scene almost the whole of the then civilized world, and lingers long on not a few spots which are now identified with difficulty, and whose monuments and memorials can be traced out only by the most painstaking research. It exhibits Christianity in collision with Judaism both in its domestic and its Hellenistic forms, with the philosophies and religions of the classic world, with the ruder and more complex types of Paganism in Asia Minor, and with adverse authorities of every description, — imperial, proconsular, military, and pontifical. It is a record of extensive travel by land and sea, involving numerous references to roads, routes, modes of transportation, the construction and management of vessels, and international relations and usages. Were we to employ, as in algebra, the last letters of the alphabet to represent unknown terms, there is hardly a paragraph in the book in which, for a well-educated English

reader, *x* might not occur more than once. Thus the chief worth of the narrative, in that it exhibits Christianity in its earliest forthputtings as a working force in human society, is entirely lost; for, in order to appreciate the power and excellence of a new spiritual agency, we must of necessity know upon whom, under what environments, and against what resistances it has been set at work.

As regards Paul's biography, which occupies so large a portion of the Acts, we have but a blurred and faded portraiture, if we know nothing of Tarsus, whose natural and social features were phototyped in his character; of Damascus, where his spiritual birth was consummated; of the extent and diversity of the soil subjected to his tilth; of the seas, coasts, and islands made memorable by his voyage and shipwreck. We can well remember in the Scriptural readings of our childhood the unparalleled dulness of that long chapter, bristling with unfamiliar nautical terms and incidents, which closes with the beaching of the ship on the coast of Malta. But now that the whole of the voyage and the catastrophe has been vivified by recent scholarship, so that we can identify every league of the ship's passage, every angle of her course, the successive expedients of the best seamanship of the day, the soundings off the island, the very nook of the beach where the Apostle was cast ashore, the chapter seems to us the most intensely interesting nautical narrative extant. In like manner has fresh life, as of a story of our own time, been poured into the entire history as recorded by St. Luke, so that there is no ancient writing which can place before us a series of so vivid sketches of character and incident, or which we can follow throughout with so sightlike a conception of the events it portrays.

This work, performed admirably by others for single parts of the narrative and personages in it, Professor Hackett has been, so far as we know, the first to accomplish for the entire book. His Commentary leaves nothing to be desired. The Introduction is methodical and exhaustive in its arrangement, and full, explicit, and candid in its details. The Greek text is made, as it must needs be for a critical work, the basis of the annotations. Various readings, where they occur, are

treated with judicial fairness, and the author's theological proclivities are not suffered to derange the balance of authorities, which is struck against the received text in the very instance in which there must have been the strongest inclination to retain it for its dogmatic significance. The verbal criticism throughout is minute, thoroughly digested, and impartial, — more nearly conformed to the best German models than in any other commentary which has yet appeared in England or America. The leading questions of a general character are carefully discussed, with a full statement of theories opposed to the author's; and — what we regard as a great gain on the score of unity and compactness — these discussions, instead of being thrown into separate essays, are incorporated into the body of the work. For the elucidation of the narrative, archæology, geography, and history are taxed to their utmost capacity, and no sources of illustration are suppressed or slighted. The chronology of the book is given in detail in the Introduction, and distinctly indicated in the progress of the Commentary. The author has made faithful use of his ripe classical scholarship, of his keen observation and careful research as a traveller in the East, and of the most recent — by far the most important — critical labors on the Acts, as well as of the earlier standard, but often unsuggestive commentaries.

In our examination of this work, we have been greatly gratified by the everywhere felt, yet unobtrusive influence, of the author's convictions and sentiments as an earnest and devout Christian believer. Strange is it that such a condition of the æsthetic and spiritual nature should not always have been regarded as an essential qualification for the Biblical commentator. No one supposes that mere philology could qualify one to expound the Greek and Latin classics; but he alone can hope to cast added light upon them who is profoundly penetrated with the spirit of the classic lands and ages. Scores of learned English lexicographers and antiquaries have there been, who could no more elicit the sense of a passage in *Othello* or *King Lear*, than they could decipher the legend on Dighton Rock; while Shakespeare was scarce more truly born a poet, than Hudson was his born

expositor, as endowed with an intuitive appreciation of the great dramatist's genius. In every department of literature, except that of the Scriptures, congeniality of taste and sentiment is deemed indispensable in an interpreter. Now the Scriptures are not only ancient writings, but religious books. Their sole interest and value hinge on their adaptation to the religious susceptibilities and needs of man. How can they be understood where these susceptibilities are dormant, these needs unfelt? One's religious intuition ought indeed never to bias his decision as a critic; but it may often clarify his discernment, and make him aware of a deeper meaning and a more consummate fitness in the sacred text, than could meet eyes which faith had not opened. This is precisely the aid which in the work before us the believing heart has rendered to the critical judgment. Not in a single instance, as it seems to us, has Professor Hackett distorted the sense of a word or sentence to suit a foregone conclusion; but there is often a clearness, richness, and fulness of illustration, which could result only from an intimate sympathy with the spirit and intent of the record. Nor is his in any sense a preaching commentary,—it contains no "practical observations"; but, even in mere verbal criticism, a truly reverent spirit makes itself felt, as a master-violinist betrays himself in the random touches by which he tests his instrument. Without a word of sanctimonious profession,—without departing, in a single instance, from the severe simplicity of a scholastic commentator writing for scholarly readers,—our author seems never for a moment to forget that he is engaged on themes of the profoundest sanctity and of immeasurable interest.

On one of the chief points of discussion in the Acts,—the (so-called) gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost,—Professor Hackett adheres to the common belief that the power of speaking languages previously unknown was conferred, in opposition to Neander, who regards the miracle of that day as having consisted in the endowment of men previously unskilled and unpractised in public speaking with the power of persuasive, cogent, eloquent utterance in the tongues which they already knew. Neander's arguments seem

to us conclusive, if we could confine our view to the Acts; but in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians there are some references to "tongues," which it is difficult to interpret otherwise than as denoting "foreign languages." Yet it may be that Paul is writing about something very different from the continuance or renewal of the Pentecostal miracle, and thus that Luke and Paul throw no light upon each other in this matter.

We would gladly follow Professor Hackett in various interesting portions of his Commentary; but, in the brief space now remaining for us, we can do him better justice by quoting one of his notes. It shall be on the phrase rendered "they strake sail," Acts xxvii. 17.

"Χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος, *having lowered the sail*. Σκεῦος is indefinite, and may be applied to almost any of the ship's appurtenances, as sails, masts, anchors, and the like. Many have supposed it to refer here to the mast, or, if there was more than one in this case, to the principal mast; but it would seem to put that supposition out of the question, that according to all probability the masts of the larger sailing ships among the ancients were not movable, like those of the smaller vessels, but were fixed in their position, and would require to be cut away; a mode of removal which the accompanying participle shows could not have been adopted in the present instance. The surprising opinion of some that σκεῦος is the anchor, is contradicted by the following οὕτως ἐφέροντο. Of the other applications of the word, the only one which the circumstances of the ship at this juncture naturally suggest is, that it refers to the sail. It is not certain how we are to take the article here. It leads us to think most directly perhaps of the large, square sail, which was attached to the principal mast. The ancients had vessels with one, two, and three masts. Τό would then point out that sail by way of eminence. The presumption is, that, if the ship carried other sails, as cannot well be doubted, they had taken them down before this; and now, having lowered the only one which they had continued to use, they let the vessel 'scud under bare poles.' This is the general view of the meaning. It would follow from this, that the wind must have changed its direction before they were wrecked on Melita; for some thirteen days elapsed before that event, during which the storm continued to rage; and within that time, had they been constantly driven before a northeast wind, they must have realized their fear of being stranded on the African coast. — But an eastern gale in the Levant, at this season of the year, is apt to be lasting; the

wind maintains itself, though with unequal violence, for a considerable time, in the same quarter. Professor Newman, of the London University, states the following fact in his own experience: ‘We sailed from Larnica in Cyprus in a small Neapolitan ship with a Turkish crew, on the 2d of December, 1830. We were bound for Latika, in Syria, — the course almost due east, — but were driven back and forced to take refuge in the port of Famagousta, the ancient Salamis. Here we remained wind-bound for days. Owing to our frequent remonstrances, the captain sailed three times, but was always driven back, and once after encountering very heavy seas and no small danger. It was finally the first of January, if my memory does not deceive me, when we reached the Syrian coast.’ It was probably such a gale which Paul’s ship encountered, that is, a series of gales from the east, but not a constant hurricane; for the seamen were able to anchor and to let down their boat, and a part of the crew to attempt to escape in it to the shore. If, then, we assume that the wind blew from the same point during the continuance of the storm, we must suppose that they adopted some precaution against being driven upon the African coast, which Luke does not mention, although his narrative may imply it. The only such precaution, according to the opinion of nautical men, which they could have adopted in their circumstances, was to *lie-to*, i. e. turn the head of the vessel as near to the wind as possible, and at the same time keep as much sail spread as they could carry in so severe a gale. For this purpose, they would need the principal sail; and the sail lowered is most likely to have been the sail above it, i. e. the topsail, or *supparum*, as the Romans termed it. By the adoption of these means they would avoid the shore on which they were so fearful of being cast, and drift in the direction of the island on which they were finally wrecked. *Tó*, according to this supposition, would refer to the sail as definite in the conceptions of the writer, or as presumptively well known to the reader.” — pp. 428 – 430.

Olshausen’s qualifications as a critic were of a very high order. He was not only a man of vast learning, — that is nothing rare in Germany, — but his learning, unlike that of many of his countrymen, was well digested. A German scholar frequently reminds one of a small vessel with an inordinately heavy deck-load, putting her out of trim, making her a slow sailer, and lumbering up all her hatches and gangways. A man, like a ship, should take in cargo no faster than he can stow it. Olshausen seems to us to have obeyed this maxim, and to have been no less sensible than erudite. He was not so

much a subtle analyst of the sacred text, as a liberal interpreter of its import and spirit. If we may judge of his mental processes from their result, we should say that with him synthesis preceded analysis. Instead of considering the possible or probable meaning of individual words and sentences, he first made himself master of the entire book under his hand, and then interpreted single passages in analogy with the tone and spirit of the whole. On the Gospels, we regard his Commentary as the most suggestive among those within our knowledge. He seems like one who took his place at the very feet of the great Teacher, in order to study his life-record. On the Pauline Epistles, Olshausen will equally commend himself to the confidence of not a few among our readers. A thorough Augustinian in his theology, he evidently came to the investigation of those writings with the antecedent certainty of finding in them all portions of the Augustinian system. The truth or falsity of this system it is beyond our fit province to discuss. We think, however, that Paul's object in his Epistles was not to impart detailed or general knowledge of Christian dogmas, but to solve such problems as had presented themselves in the administration of the Church by the already admitted principles of Christianity. This latter purpose Olshausen, indeed, does not leave out of sight; but in his mind it is evidently subordinated to the former. Whether he has rightly understood Paul's theology or not, he felt the strongest sympathy with the Apostle's character, and had a clear and lofty appreciation of his greatness of intellect and soul, so that his interpretations are never chargeable with shallowness or inadequacy.

Olshausen did not live to complete his work. The Philipians, the Pastoral Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse remained untouched. Ebrard and Wiesinger have continued, and nearly completed, the commentary. The Catholic Epistles alone are unfinished; the commentary on the Apocalypse is as yet untranslated; and the New York publishers promise in due time a seventh volume, to contain these. We have made no examination of Ebrard's part of the continuation. Wiesinger's commentary on the Pastoral Epistles we have read, and we confess that,



while we suppose him less a man of genius, we regard him as a no less sagacious and trustworthy interpreter than Olshausen. On those Epistles we should indeed name him as preferable to any other commentator within our cognizance, and we doubt not that we should say the same of the residue of his critical labors, had we made ourselves acquainted with them.

In the edition before us, Professor Kendrick has himself translated only the Commentary on the Second Epistle to Timothy and that on Philemon. For the rest of the work, he availed himself of previous versions. But throughout the entire six volumes he has made his readers largely his debtors. His notes are few, but eminently seasonable, judicious, erudite, and instructive. There is hardly one of them which we would willingly miss. It is interesting to mark the tokens of the respective nationalities of author and editor, as they are here brought together. So mutually incompatible are the German and the American mind, that the wisest German can hardly fail sometimes to write what an American will deem weak, irrelevant, or absurd; and we have no doubt that a *vice versa* statement is equally true. Now, whenever Olshausen propounds an explanation which (to use those sadly abused terms) is subjective rather than objective in its source, — is drawn from his own idiosyncrasies or his German cast of thought, and not from the obvious intent of Evangelist or Apostle, — the American editor in the most simple and direct style possible indicates the error, and suggests and defends the more tenable interpretation. He has thus shown a very high degree of critical acumen and soundness, which would make us glad to welcome him in some work entirely his own. In closing our brief notice of his labors, we would call the attention of our New England readers to that same University of Rochester. Has it not engaged in its administration an extraordinary amount of learning and talent? There is not a single member of its Faculty, (unless some name has escaped our knowledge,) who has not won and merited in his own department distinguished reputation.

Of Meyer's Commentary we have room to speak but briefly. Its salient points are its comprehensiveness, its philological

accuracy, and its honesty. Wonderfully concise, and employing abbreviations *ad libitum*, it brings together on every point all leading opinions, the reasons for them, and the names of their supporters. It is literally a "Synopsis Criticorum." It contains, with reference to every word that needs to be dwelt upon, all of lexicography that is applicable to it in its position and use. Meyer has also the merit — very rare in a German — of never substituting his own opinions for those of his author. He is far from orthodox — we often wish it were otherwise — in his own notions; but he does not attempt to make the sacred text a party to his heresies. He expounds its words as in his dispassionate judgment he believes them to mean, and then with perfect *naïveté* expresses his own dissent from their meaning. We differ from him as to his views of inspiration and authority; but we want no better help than his in determining what is actually taught in the New Testament; and could we have but a single commentary, we should, for the purpose of critical study, select his in preference to all others. The work, though bearing Meyer's name and sanction throughout, has been performed in part by Lünemann and Huther, and the volume on the Apocalypse has, we believe, not yet appeared, — at least, we have not seen it announced.

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## ART. XII. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The Poetical Works of JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.* Complete in two volumes. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 16mo. pp. 315, 322.

THE poems of Mr. Lowell have a peculiar and specific value, derived partly from their intrinsic merits and partly from the time and circumstances of their composition. To adopt a rather objectionable phrase of vulgar criticism, we regard him, to a certain extent, as the Wordsworth of New England. He began to write at a time when the reformatory agitations of that region had developed among the refined and enlightened classes an unwonted activity and independence of thought. Theories of metaphysics and religion, previously unknown on this side